

## City of Durham

At a Meeting of **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Town Hall, Durham, on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2006, at 5.25 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor Pape (in the Chair)  
and Councillors: Crathorne, Hopgood, Howarth, Moderate, Robinson, Simpson, Walton and Wolstenholme.

**Also Present:** Councillors Hepplewhite, Jackson, Lodge, Marsden, Southwell and Wynn

### **283 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Freeman and Simmons

### **284 MINUTES**

Minutes of the Meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2006, were deferred for confirmation at the next meeting as the Minute Book for August and September had not yet been published.

### **285 REFERRAL OF POLICY SCRUTINY REPORT -TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM**

Councillor Jackson, Portfolio Holder for Procurement and Corporate Affairs had been requested to attend the Meeting and advise Members as to why the Policy Scrutiny Panel's Report and Recommendations on the Telephone Communications System had been referred back by Cabinet.

Councillor Jackson informed Members that an Access to Service Strategy had been adopted which included the introduction of the CityInfo sites and the Telephone System/Call Centres. The third part of the Strategy, the implementation of an electronic Customer Relations Management system (C.R.M.), would go live in November. This would provide that a single phone call could be routed directly through to the back office systems, therefore improving the service that the customer receives. Eventually it was the intention, through the "Durham Connects" initiative, to have a single contact number for all service enquiries, which could be accessed from anywhere within the County.

Councillor Jackson also informed the Committee that a similar system would be set up to allow Members to channel all their queries and service requests through the Democratic Support Team, who would be provided with a similar CRM based electronic system to log and track Member's queries and service requests. This would mean that it would no longer be necessary for Members to contact individual Officers throughout the Service Areas and therefore avoid the difficulties previously experienced by Members in contacting those Officers.

Members expressed concern that this information had not been made available to the Policy Scrutiny Panel, during its Scrutiny of the topic and further concern regarding the possible effects of this system on the workload of Democratic Support Officers.

Recommended : That in light of the concerns expressed by Committee Members, the report of the Telephone Communications System be referred back to the Policy Scrutiny Panel for further consideration.

## **286 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman remarked that Councillor Simmons had submitted her apologies due to illness and asked that the good wishes of the Committee be passed on.

In the absence of Councillor Simmons (Chair) and Councillor Freeman (Vice Chair), for the meeting of the Policy Scrutiny Panel the following evening, the Chairman sought the consent of the Scrutiny Committee to Chair the meeting in their absence. The Committee agreed that, rather than rearrange or cancel the Meeting, in this instance the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee chair the Policy Scrutiny Panel Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup>. October, 2006.

The Chairman advised Members of his attendance at a NEREO Regional Scrutiny Network Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2006, and of his attendance at a forthcoming County Durham (Joint Members and Officers) Scrutiny Network to be held on 17th November 2006.

## **287 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan, which was effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2006.

Councillor Lodge raised a query regarding the Strategic Risk Register, in relation to the Swimming Pool, asked why previous meetings relating to this had been held in secret and requested that information from the meetings to be given to all members. Councillor Southwell informed members that the purpose of the meetings was merely to act as a progress check in relation to the project.

The Chairman advised members that a Special Cabinet was to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2006 and that a full presentation on the Swimming Pool would be given by the Executive Director.

## **288 DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS SINCE LAST MEETING**

A copy of the schedule indicating the decisions taken by Portfolio Holders since the last Meeting is attached at Appendix A.

Members queried one of the decisions and were advised that clarification would be sought and Members would be advised accordingly.

## **289 CABINET DECISIONS 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2006**

The Cabinet report had been noted and there were no items on which the Committee wished to comment.

## **290 VERBAL UPDATE ON PROGRESS FROM SCRUTINY PANELS**

The Committee was given verbal reports from the Panels, on the progress of their respective Scrutiny studies.

**291 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members had no further business to discuss.

Meeting terminated at 5.55 p.m.

Chairman